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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the occasion of the Pope's visit to Nigeria**

The European Union welcomes His Holiness the Pope's visit to Nigeria from 21 to 23 March. The European Union remains deeply concerned about the lack of respect for human rights in Nigeria, in particular the continued detention of Chief Moshood Abiola and the other political prisoners. The European Union is also concerned about the lack of progress towards democracy in Nigeria and calls on the Nigerian authorities to take immediate steps to ensure that the final stages of the transition are conducted in a manner which respects the rule of law and the Nigerian people's right to choose their own government and leaders in a free and unfettered way

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